

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 SSC-01 SAM-01 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 EA-06 FRB-03 INR-07 IO-10

NSAE-00 OPIC-03 SP-02 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 /103 W

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O R 051133Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1222

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1511

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: SIGNIFICANCE OF CABINET CHANGES

REF MADRID 1440 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING FIVE CABINET CHANGES WERE ANNOUNCED NIGHT OF MAR 4:

A. LABOR AND THIRD VICE PRESIDENT: FERNANDO SUAREZ GONZALEZ REPLACES LICINIO DE LA FUENTE WHO RESIGNED MORE THAN 1 WEEK AGO. CURRENTLY TECHNICAL SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY, SUAREZ IS PERSONABLE 41-YEAR-OLD CIVIL SERVANT-POLITICIAN WHO HAS HELD MOVIMIENTO POSTS IN PAST BEGINNING IN YOUTH WING, BUT WHO WAS OUTSPOKEN ADVOCATE OF EVOLUTION WITHIN SYSTEM WHILE IN CORTES. HE HAS SERVED PREVIOUSLY IN LABOR MINISTRY AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IMMIGRATION.

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B. JUSTICE: JOSE MARIA SANCHEZ-VENTURA Y PASCUAL REPLACES FRANCISCO

RUIZ JARABO. SANCHEZ-VENTURA HAS BEEN SERVING AS UNDER SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF INFORMATION SINCE NOV 1974. HE IS A LAWYER AND NOTARY, ACTIVE CATHOLIC LAYMAN, AND HAS SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF LIBERAL MADRID DAILY "INFORMACIONES". C. SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT: FERNANDO HERRERO TEJEDOR REPLACES JOSE UTRERA MOLINA. HERRERO HAS BEEN FISCAL GENERAL (ATTORNEY GENERAL) FOR PAST TEN YEARS, BUT BEFORE THAT TIME HE HELD SERIES OF POSTS OF INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY, IN FALANGE AND ITS SUCCESSOR ORGANIZATION NATIONSAL MOVEMENT. WAS VICE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT FROM 1961 TO 1965. THOROUGHLY COMMITTED TO MOVEMENT, HERRERO HAS, HOWEVER, MADE WELL PUBLICIZED STATEMENTS IN RECENT YEARS APPEALING FOR EVOLUTION WITHIN SYSTEM. D. INDUSTRY: ALFONSO ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA REPLACES ALFREDO SANTOS BLANCO. ALVAREZ IS COMPETENT TECHNOCRAT AND MANAGER WHO HAS BUILT CAREER IN STATE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AND WHO DISPLAYS NO STRONG POLITICAL COLORATION. HE WAS PRESIDENT OF PHOSPHATES BU CRAA, SPANISH SAHARA MINING COMPANY, IN FORMATIVE YEARS AND IS NOW PRESIDENT OF ENSIDESA, STATE-OWNED STEEL FIRM. E. COMMERCE: JOSE LUIS CERON AYUSO REPLACES NEMESIO FERNANDEZ-CUESTA. CERON IS EXPERIENCED CAREER DIPLOMAT AND TALENTED AND AGGRESSIVE NEGOTIATOR, WHOSE LAST FOREIGN MINISTRY POST WAS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. HE IS COMPETENT AND DYNAMIC, HAS DECIDED AND POSITIVE VIEWS ABOUT SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH THE CEE, AND UNDERSTANDS UNITED STATES INTERESTS AND VIEWS WITH REGARD TO TRADE AND INVESTMENT. CERON NOW IS UNDER SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

2. CHANGES ARE MORE LIMITED THAN HAS BEEN WIDELY SPECULATED, TENDING TO CONFIRM REPORTS THAT FRANCO HIMSELF OVERRULED ARIAS PROPOSAL FOR MORE SWEEPING SHAKEUP. NEW CABINET MEMBERS, WHO ARE DRAWN FROM NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND BUREAUCRATIC ELITES, ARE COMPETENT EXPERIENCED MEN FORMED BY SYSTEM AND LOYAL TO IT. ABSENT AMONG NEW FACES ARE ANY FIGURES WITH STRONG PERSONAL POLITICAL BASE OR REGIONAL IDENTIFICATION. ALSO ABSENT ARE REPRESENTATIVES OF TENDENCIES SUCH AS OPUS DEI, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OR MONARCHISTS.

3. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF REPLACEMENT OF UTRERA MOLINA, APPOINTMENTS ARE SEEN MORE TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TIDYING-UP THAN AS FAR REACHING POLITICAL CHANGE. LONG FN
WN THAT ARIAS HAS WANTED TO
REPLACE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ELDERLY AND INFIRM RIGHTIST WHO ARIAS
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INHERITED FROM PREVIOUS GOVT. SIMILARLY, CHANGES IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY PORTFOLIOS HAVE BEEN PREDICTED SINCE RESIGNATION OF THEIR MENTOR, FORMER FINANCE MINISTER ANTONIO BARRERA DE IRIMO IN NOV 74. INDICATIONS ARE THAT CURRENT FINANCE MIN CABELLO DE ALBA HAS EXERCISED SAME PRIVILEGE OF HAVING MAIN OVICE IN FILLING INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE PORTFOLIOS. NEW INCUMBENTS OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE HAVE RECENTLY HAD CLOSE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION WITH CABELLO DE ALBA AND PROBABLY REPRESENT HIS PERSONAL PREFERENCE.

4. SUAREZ, WHO APPARENTLY IS PERSONAL FAVORITE OF PRIME MIN ARIAS, BRINGS PERSONAL POLITICAL APPEAL AND TECHNICAL COMPETENCE TO LABOR PORTFOLIO VACATED BY RESIGNATION OF LUCINIO DE LA FUENTE.

5. APPOINTMENT OF SANCHEZ-VENTURA BRINGS YOUNGER, FRESHER, AND POSSIBLY MORE LIBERAL PERSONALITY INTO MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, WHICH HAD SUFFERED NOTICEABLY IN PAST YEAR FROM WEAK LEADERSHIP. SANCHEZ VENTURA IS PROTEGE OF INTERIOR MINISTER JOSE GARCIA HERNANDEZ AND SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN HIS CANDIDATE FOR CABINET POST, PARTICULARLY SINCE JUSTICE INCREASINGLY UNDER GUIDANCE OF INTERIOR FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND INTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS WHILE SANCHEZ-VENTURA HAS SOME LIBERAL ANTECEDENTS, HE HAD REPUTATION AMONG NEWSMEN AS TOUGH ENFORCER OF PRESS RESTRICTIONS.

6. REPLACEMENT OF UTRERA MOLINA BY HERRERO TEJEDOR IS SOMETHING OF A VICTORY FOR ARIAS AS IT REMOVES PERSONALITY WHO HAD UNDERCUT HIM IN HIS RELATIONS WITH FRANCO AND HAD BECOME OBSTACLE TO HIS PROGRAM OF LIMITED LIBERALIZATION. SIMILARLY, PRESENCE OF HERRERO, MAN OF CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE WITH MILDLY LIBERAL CACHET, IMPROVES SOMEWHAT PROSPECTS THAT NATIONAL MOVEMENT CAN CREDIBLY AFFIRM ITS NEUTRALITY AMONG DIFFERENT POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS NOW IN FORMATION. HERRERO HAS BEEN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATE IN PAST OF ARIAS AND GARCIA HERNANDEZ IN LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD.

7. UNLIKE IN PREVIOUS SHAKEUPS, GOVT HANDLED THESE CHANGES IN LOW KEYED, UNSENSATIONAL MANNER, THUS AVOIDING GIVING IMPRESSION OF CRISIS, BREAK IN CONTINUITY OR MAJOR CHANGES IN DIRECTION OF POLICY. WHILE UTRERA KNOWN TO HAVE DEVELOPED CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP TO FRANCO, NO INFORMATION SO FAR SUGGESTS THERE WERE SERIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FRANCO AND ARIAS ON ANY OF PROPOSED CHANGES. ROLE OF PRINCE JUAN CARLOS IN SHAKEUP UNCLEAR. HE APPARENTLY WAS CONSULTED BEFOREHAND BUT LEFT TOWN ON OFFICIAL TRIP BEFORE FINAL DECISIONS
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8. ON BALANCE, CABINET CHANGES SIGNIFY NO NEW POLITICAL DEPARTURE CHANGES, HOWEVER, DO INCREASE PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVED TEAMWORK IN CABINET WHILE MAKING IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO ARIAS' CONTROL. AT SAME TIME, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF REPLACEMENT OF UTRERA AND RUIZ JARABO, CABINET'S SLIGHTLY MORE LIBERAL COMPLEXION PUTS IN ARIAS IN BETTER POSITION TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON HIS CAUTIOUS PROGRAM OF LIBERALIZATION.
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